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## Celebrity Chow with pregnant Chinese-Australian actress-host Jaymee Ong

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**You know those stories we hear about second pregnancies being much easier and smoother than the first?**

Chinese-Australian actress-host Jaymee Ong would have you know that in her case, it's the total opposite.

The 35-year-old Singapore-based Beam Artistes entertainer is currently 6½ months pregnant with her second child and keeping mum about the gender.

Ong told M over lunch last Friday at one of her family's favourite eateries, Jumbo Seafood Restaurant on Dempsey Hill, that "it's a lot more difficult this time round".

"My body is five years older, I get tired more easily and I had very bad morning sickness in my first trimester," she said.

"There were days when I couldn't even walk into Cold Storage! The sight of food would make me feel like throwing up."

Ong has a five-year-old daughter, Juliet, with her husband Matthew Heath, an Australian electrical engineer.

Her pregnancy cravings, however, are "very similar" to when she was carrying Juliet in 2010.

"Ice-cream, banana split, chocolate cake. I have to have ice-cream every night," she said.

"Cravings aside, I tend to eat cleanly at home. Simple, clean fresh food. Nothing elaborate and nothing too saucy."

Now that she's expecting, it'll be a while before local TV audiences can



Chilli crab



Black pepper crab

get to see her acting again on our small screens.

Ong, who still hosts cable channel AXN's entertainment show eBuzz once a week, said with a sigh: "I miss that camaraderie on the set of (Channel 5 action drama) Point Of Entry. And I miss working with a crew.

"But obviously, right now, even if a TV series comes my way, I don't think it's the right time to take it on.

"I'd love to get back to acting once everything settles down."

**We're feasting on Jumbo's chilli crab, black pepper crab, deep-fried mini buns, scallops wrapped in yam ring and sambal kang kong today. You must love crabs!**

Yes I do. My family and I dine at Jumbo quite often. Before my current pregnancy, I was a black pepper crab person. Now, my tastes have changed and I prefer chilli crab. Juli-

et likes the steamed crabs here.

I've lived in Singapore for 11 years and I've tried crabs at almost every eatery, be it other popular restaurant chains or hole-in-the-wall joints. I still think Jumbo is the most consistent as it has the best and biggest crabs.

**There are some items that are apparently out for pregnant women, like sashimi, raw oysters and alcohol. How are you dealing with that?**

Fresh oysters and champagne – that's the first thing I want after this baby pops out. (Smiles) Luke's Oyster Bar & Chop House at Gemmill Lane has the best oysters, which it gets from Canada, New Zealand and France. It's expensive, but the oysters are always amazing.

Its Bloody Mary is fantastic too. Freshly-shucked oysters with a glass of Bloody Mary or champagne, that's

my indulgence. As soon as the baby is out, I'm going to be there.

**Are you the sort of mum who is super strict about what your daughter eats?**

Juliet is pretty much allowed to eat anything, just not all the time. I don't give her candy or chocolate every day, but yeah, she can eat it. I don't believe in keeping things off-limits for children.

Those kids who aren't allowed to eat anything, they'd be stuffing their faces with food when they go to a birthday party. I don't want her to be that weird kid. Thankfully, Juliet herself knows how to make the right choices. She eats a tonne of fruit – I call her my fruit bat.

**Has motherhood made you a better cook?**

No, it has made me a worse cook, because I have a helper at home. (Laughs) When I do cook, I'm not too bad. I do a really good breakfast and brunch, stuff like pancakes and hash browns. I'm great with steak and salads. Pastas and grilled fish are easy too.

**Do you like local hawker food? Any favourite hawker haunts?**

Oh yes! Carrot cake, satay and laksa. We live in the east, so of course, Katong laksa is a favourite of ours. My helper knows how to make laksa, so if she does it at home, I'd tell her to add chicken and extra vegetables.

Before I got pregnant, my husband and I would ride our bikes to Satay by the Bay at Gardens by the Bay.